

  
FACES OF FLORIDA

# Fern

SENRA-JAMES

Fernando was born in Miami and was no stranger to the beach or outdoor activities. Weekends were always spent on the family's boat in Key Largo and enjoying South Florida's abundant sunshine. Taking after his fair-skinned mom, sunburns were a part of life despite her constant reminders to apply sunscreen daily, especially when spending time outdoors.

Shortly after turning 20 and coming home from college for the summer, he mentioned to his parents that he had a skin growth on his inner forearm. He admitted it had been there for nearly two years before bringing it to anyone's attention and throughout that time it had definitely grown in size.

A biopsy revealed that it was melanoma and it was removed via Mohs surgery at the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center in Miami. Fernando continues to receive yearly comprehensive dermatological exams and is encouraged by his dermatologist to apply high SPF sunscreen during any time spent outdoors as sunscreen is the most effective way to prevent future skin cancer.



"Having dealt with skin cancer at a young age helped me realize that it doesn't take an entire lifetime to develop this disease. You can be an 18-year-old who doesn't fully understand why it's important to speak up when something on your arm doesn't look quite right. **I now take skin care very seriously and want to make sure I have access to any and all sun protection that can help me live my life without feeling restricted.**"